

SERIES GRAND FINALE!

# STAR WARS

MARVEL  
50

SOULE  
MUSABEKOV  
ROSENBERG



RATED T



# THE PATH OF HOPE

**As Leia, Lando, Chewie and the other members of the Rebellion continue the fight against the Empire, Luke must also continue his training to become a Jedi.**

**To do so, he must explore the past as well as the future. . . .**

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**Part I:**  
**You would prefer another target?**



Ossus. The Jedi Temple.

Long after the Empire's fall.  
A time of peace.

"COME TAKE  
A WALK WITH  
ME, BEN."

I'D LIKE  
TO TELL YOU  
A STORY.



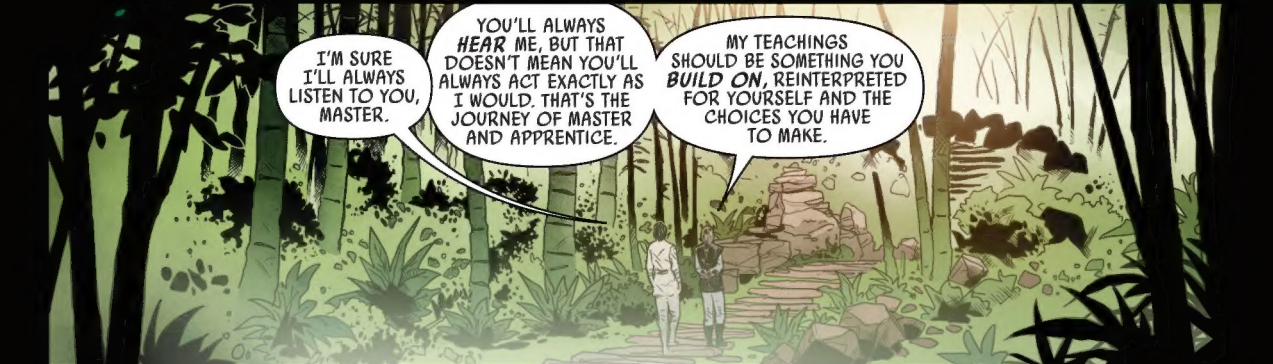




WHAT DO YOU WANT TO TELL ME, MASTER SKYWALKER?

YOU'RE ALMOST READY FOR THE TRIALS, BEN. SOON ENOUGH, YOU'LL BE MAKING YOUR OWN DECISIONS OUT THERE IN THE GALAXY AS A JEDI KNIGHT.

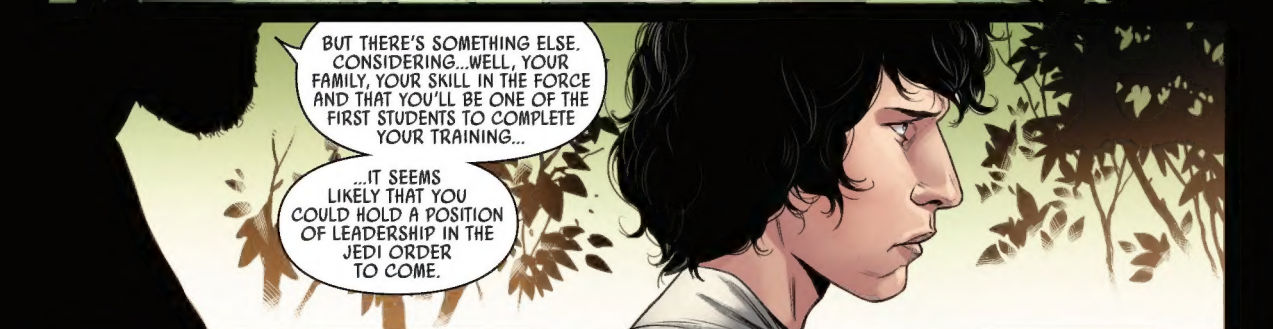
YOU WON'T HAVE TO LISTEN TO ME ANYMORE.



I'M SURE I'LL ALWAYS LISTEN TO YOU, MASTER.

YOU'LL ALWAYS HEAR ME, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU'LL ALWAYS ACT EXACTLY AS I WOULD. THAT'S THE JOURNEY OF MASTER AND APPRENTICE.

MY TEACHINGS SHOULD BE SOMETHING YOU **BUILD ON**, REINTERPRETED FOR YOURSELF AND THE CHOICES YOU HAVE TO MAKE.



BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE. CONSIDERING...WELL, YOUR FAMILY, YOUR SKILL IN THE FORCE AND THAT YOU'LL BE ONE OF THE FIRST STUDENTS TO COMPLETE YOUR TRAINING...

...IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT YOU COULD HOLD A POSITION OF LEADERSHIP IN THE JEDI ORDER TO COME.



LEADERS HAVE TO MAKE **DECISIONS**--TOUGH ONES, SOMETIMES. CHOICES ABOUT LIFE AND DEATH.

I WANT TO TELL YOU A STORY FROM MY OWN PAST THAT MAY GUIDE YOU, IF AND WHEN A CHOICE LIKE THAT FALLS TO YOU.



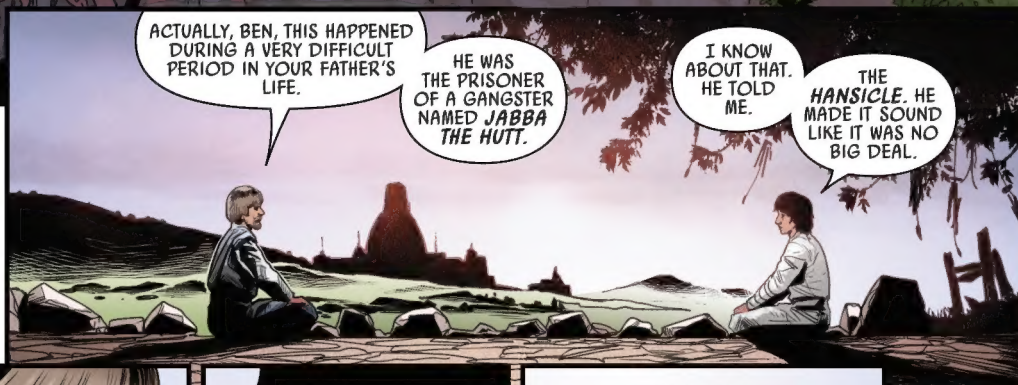


LET'S  
SIT.

THIS IS  
A STORY ABOUT ME,  
YOUR MOTHER, YOUR  
UNCLE LANDO, CHEWBACCA--  
THE DROIDS WERE THERE  
TOO. THREEPIO  
AND ARTOO.

BUT  
NOT MY  
DAD?

I'D LOVE  
TO HEAR WHAT  
HE WAS UP  
TO.



ACTUALLY, BEN, THIS HAPPENED  
DURING A VERY DIFFICULT  
PERIOD IN YOUR FATHER'S  
LIFE.

HE WAS  
THE PRISONER  
OF A GANGSTER  
NAMED **JABBA**  
**THE HUTT**.

I KNOW  
ABOUT THAT.  
HE TOLD  
ME.

THE  
**HANSICLE**. HE  
MADE IT SOUND  
LIKE IT WAS NO  
BIG DEAL.



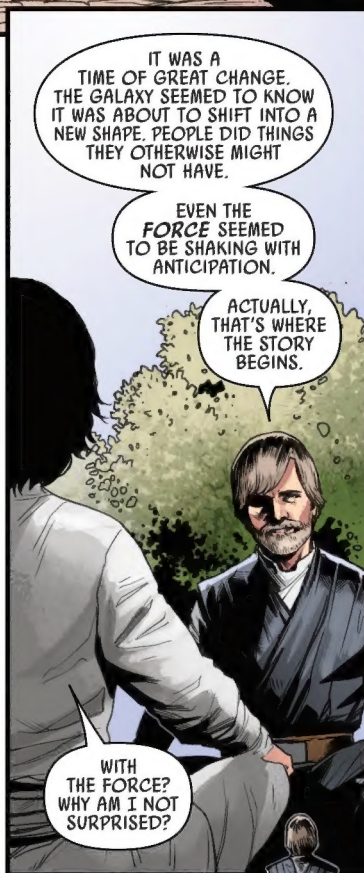
THAT'S HAN.  
HE'LL INSIST THE  
**FALCON** COULD FLY  
TO WILD SPACE AND  
BACK IN HALF A DAY, BUT  
WHEN IT COMES TO THE  
SACRIFICES HE MADE  
FOR THE REBELLION,  
IT'S "OH, NO  
BIG DEAL."



I'VE HEARD  
**SO MANY**  
STORIES ABOUT  
THAT TIME.

LANDO TOLD  
ME ABOUT SOME  
GANGSTER WAR AND  
DROIDS GOING HAYWIRE  
AND KILLING PEOPLE, AND  
MOM TALKED ABOUT THE  
TROUBLE THE ALLIANCE  
HAD AFTER THE **BATTLE**  
OF **HOTH**...

HOW DID  
ALL OF THAT  
HAPPEN IN JUST  
A YEAR?



IT WAS A  
TIME OF GREAT CHANGE.  
THE GALAXY SEEMED TO KNOW  
IT WAS ABOUT TO SHIFT INTO A  
NEW SHAPE. PEOPLE DID THINGS  
THEY OTHERWISE MIGHT  
NOT HAVE.

EVEN THE  
**FORCE** SEEMED  
TO BE SHAKING WITH  
ANTICIPATION.

ACTUALLY,  
THAT'S WHERE  
THE STORY  
BEGINS.

WITH  
THE **FORCE**?  
WHY AM I NOT  
SURPRISED?



BECAUSE  
YOU'VE  
BEEN PAYING  
ATTENTION, MY  
APPRENTICE.





## The Mid Rim. Gazian.

"YOU KNOW I FACED  
**DARTH VADER** MORE  
THAN ONCE.

"I ALMOST **DIED** THE FIRST TIME.  
I HAD A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT  
USING THE FORCE.

"MASTER YODA AND OBI-WAN KENOBI DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO TEACH ME ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE JEDI OR ANYTHING BUT WHAT THEY THOUGHT I'D NEED TO FACE VADER.

"I HAD TO FIND **OTHER SOURCES**  
FOR THAT INFORMATION. ONE WAS  
THE FIRST OF THE **JEDI TEXTS**--  
YOU'VE SEEN THOSE.

"ANOTHER WAS THE  
PLACE I GOT IT...  
**THE LIVING SEA**  
OF **GAZIAN**.

OKAY, ARTOO.  
THIS TIME...WE'RE  
GOING TO BE  
**SMART**.

"GAZIAN IS A WORLD COVERED BY  
AN IMMENSE, PLANETARY NETWORK  
OF **FUNGUS**. IT'S ESSENTIALLY AN  
ENORMOUS RECORDING SYSTEM.

"THE **FUNGUS TAKES IN** ANY LIVING MIND IT  
ENCOUNTERS--ITS MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCES  
AS OF THAT MOMENT BECOME PART OF IT.

"THEN, ANYONE WHO VISITS LATER CAN ACCESS  
THOSE RECORDINGS--LIKE PROJECTIONS OF  
PEOPLE YOU CAN SPEAK TO, LEARN FROM.

k/k/k/k/k/k

"IT'S AN INCREDIBLE RESOURCE,  
LIKE A LIVING LIBRARY.



"BUT IT'S ALSO *DANGEROUS*.  
GAZIAN DOESN'T ALWAYS LIKE  
TO LET THINGS GO.

IF I'M NOT  
OUT OF THERE IN  
TEN MINUTES, *PULL*  
ME OUT. I ALMOST GOT  
STUCK DOWN THERE  
FOREVER LAST TIME.  
NOT TAKING THAT  
CHANCE AGAIN.

OKAY.  
WISH ME  
LUCK.

*Boop!*

"THE FIRST TIME I VISITED  
THE PLANET, I MET A JEDI  
FROM AN EARLIER AGE  
NAMED ELZAR MANN.

"HE TAUGHT ME  
MANY IMPORTANT  
THINGS. I'D JUST  
HAD AN INTENSE  
EXPERIENCE  
HEALING A RED  
KYBER CRYSTAL  
AND WANTED HIS  
INSIGHT.

"HIS, OR ONE OF THE  
OTHER JEDI WHO I  
KNOW VISITED GAZIAN  
OVER THE CENTURIES.

"IT WAS  
FOOLISH.  
RECKLESS.

"NOT JUST JEDI  
CAME TO THAT  
PLACE, AFTER ALL.

HNNNGH!




"THE LIVING SEA  
HOLDS DARKER  
BEINGS AS WELL."

I KNOW  
YOU.







WHO ARE YOU? OR...WHO WERE YOU?

MY NAME IS AZLIN RELL. I WAS A JEDI KNIGHT CENTURIES BEFORE YOUR TIME. THEN... I BECAME SOMETHING ELSE. I HAD NO CHOICE.

I DO NOT KNOW WHAT BECAME OF ME AFTER I VISITED THIS PLACE.



DID YOU FIND OUR GIFT TO YOU FROM YOUR LAST VISIT TO BE USEFUL?

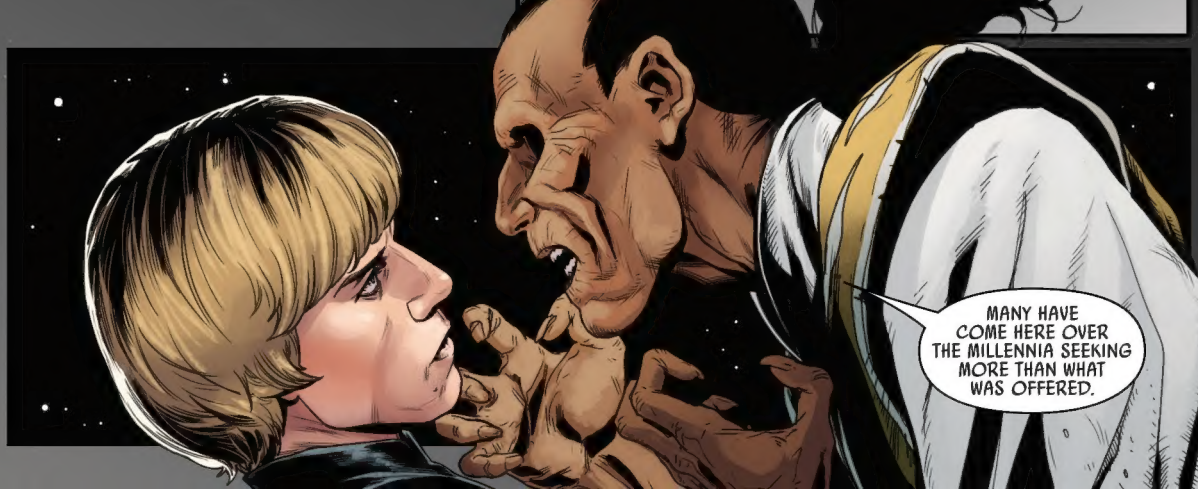
THE BOOK? THE JEDI TEXT? YES. VERY USEFUL.

BUT IT MAKES REFERENCE TO *MORE*. OTHER VOLUMES. I THOUGHT PERHAPS...



OH, SO YOU ARE GREEDY. YOU COME SEEKING *MORE* GIFTS.

I'M NOT GREEDY. I'M JUST TRYING TO GATHER KNOWLEDGE TO HELP ME UNDERSTAND HOW TO FIGHT THE SITH.



MANY HAVE COME HERE OVER THE MILLENNIA SEEKING MORE THAN WHAT WAS OFFERED.





MANY OF  
THOSE REMAIN  
HERE STILL.



IF YOU DIDN'T WANT TO HELP ME, WHY DID YOU GIVE ME THE BOOK IN THE FIRST PLACE?

I GAVE YOU NOTHING. THE COLLECTIVE MIND- PRESENCE OF THE JEDI WHO HAVE VISITED HERE SAW FIT TO AID YOU IN YOUR EFFORTS TO RESTORE THE ORDER.

WELL, CAN I TALK TO THEM?

NO. IT IS MY TIME HERE NOW, AND I WILL NOT RELINQUISH IT TO THAT FOP **ELZAR MANN** OR ANYONE ELSE.

BUT I WAS ONCE A **JEDI**, AND ALL MY CHOICES WERE IN SERVICE OF TRYING TO KEEP THEM FROM BEING DESTROYED. I CAN DO THAT STILL.

I KNOW OF THE WAR GRIPPING YOUR TIME, LUKE SKYWALKER. I HAVE KNOWLEDGE THAT CAN HELP YOU.

A WAY TO END YOUR ENEMIES WITH NO RISK TO YOU OR THOSE YOU CARE FOR.

I SOUGHT IT OUT IN AN EFFORT TO END THE **SHRII KA RAI** IN A WAY THAT WOULD NOT REQUIRE ME TO BE ANYWHERE NEAR THEM.

PERHAPS I FOUND IT. PERHAPS IT WORKED.

I DO NOT KNOW WHAT BECAME OF ME AFTER I LEFT THIS PLACE.

WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO TELL YOU ABOUT IT?



## The Rebel Alliance Fleet.

"I LEFT GAZIAN WITH WHAT I HAD HOPED TO OBTAIN--KNOWLEDGE-- BUT NOT THE KIND I'D GONE LOOKING FOR.

"AZLIN RELL GAVE ME INFORMATION THAT HAD THE POTENTIAL TO CHANGE THE ENTIRE WAR, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO USE IT.

"SO I DID WHAT I ALWAYS DID IN SITUATIONS LIKE THAT...

"...I TALKED TO MY FRIENDS."

SOUNDS LIKE AN **EXTREMELY FREAKY SITUATION** ON THAT PLANET, LUKE. I CAN SEE GOING THERE ONCE, BEFORE YOU KNEW THE DEAL, BUT **TWICE?**

I'LL EAT A MUSHROOM STEW, SURE, BUT LETTING THEM EAT ME? FORGET ABOUT IT.

YOU GET USED TO IT, LANDO. BUT MORE TO THE POINT, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WHAT AZLIN TOLD ME?

IT SOUNDS LIKE A **WEAPON**, LUKE. AN **ASSASSINATION WEAPON**. THE KIND WHERE YOU CAN KILL FROM A DISTANCE... ACROSS THE GALAXY, EVEN.

THE ETHICS OF THAT...

**HRRRAOOOH!**

GOOD POINT, CHEWIE. WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IF THIS THING IS REAL OR STILL THERE AFTER ALL THIS TIME.

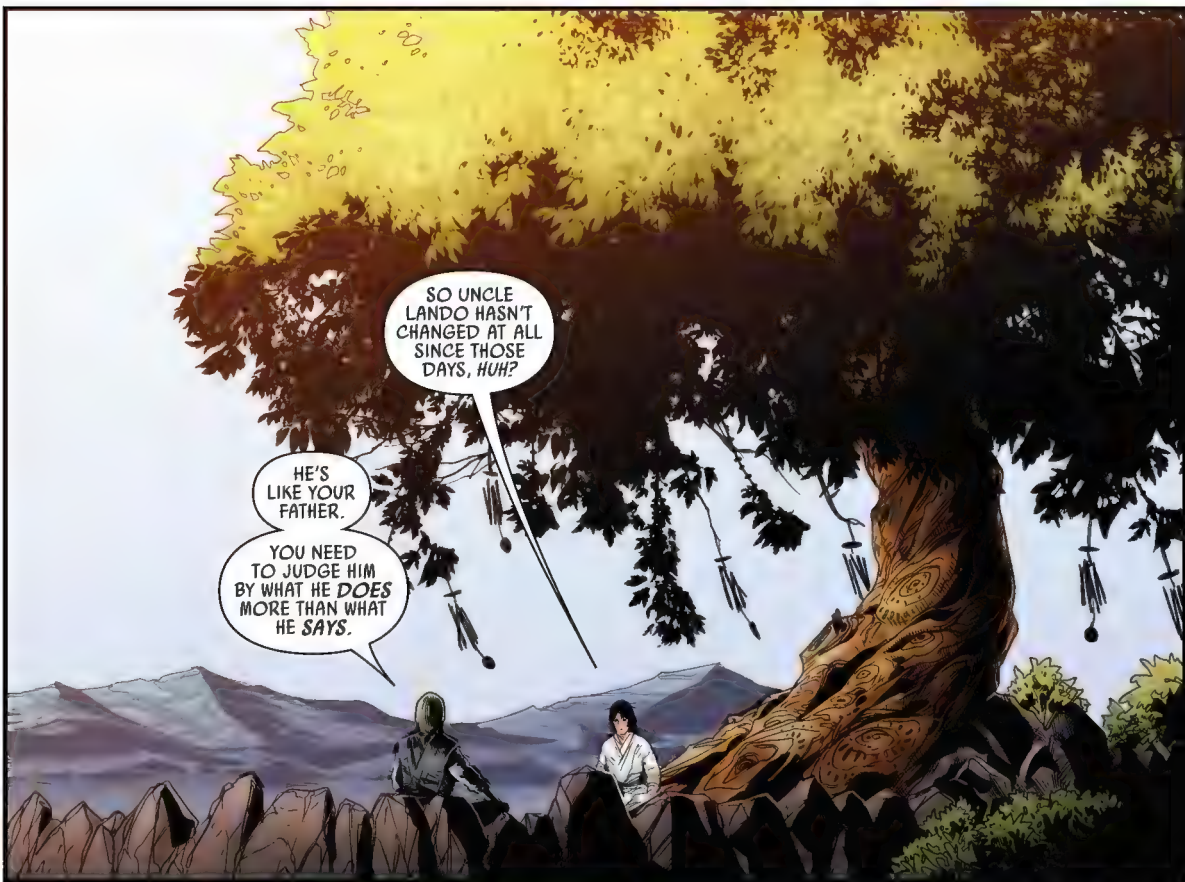
THIS AZLIN CHARACTER TOLD YOU WHERE IT IS, RIGHT, LUKE?

HE DID. A WORLD IN THE INNER RIM.

WELL, OKAY, THEN. HERE'S AN IDEA.

WHY DON'T WE SEE IF THE DAMN THING EVEN **EXISTS** BEFORE WE WASTE A LOT OF VALUABLE DRINKING TIME YELLING AT EACH OTHER ABOUT **ETHICS?**





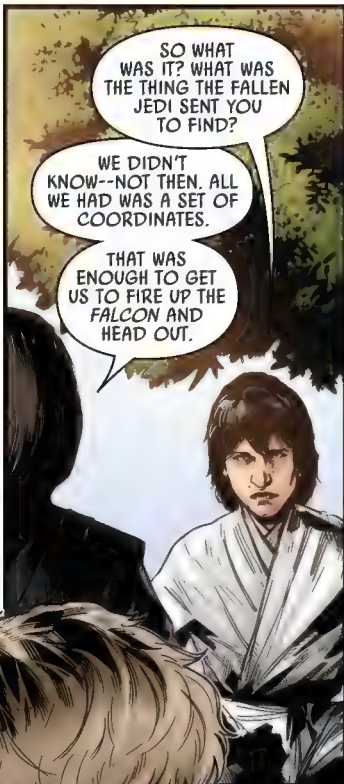
SO UNCLE LANDO HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL SINCE THOSE DAYS, HUH?

HE'S LIKE YOUR FATHER.

YOU NEED TO JUDGE HIM BY WHAT HE **DOES** MORE THAN WHAT HE **SAYS**.



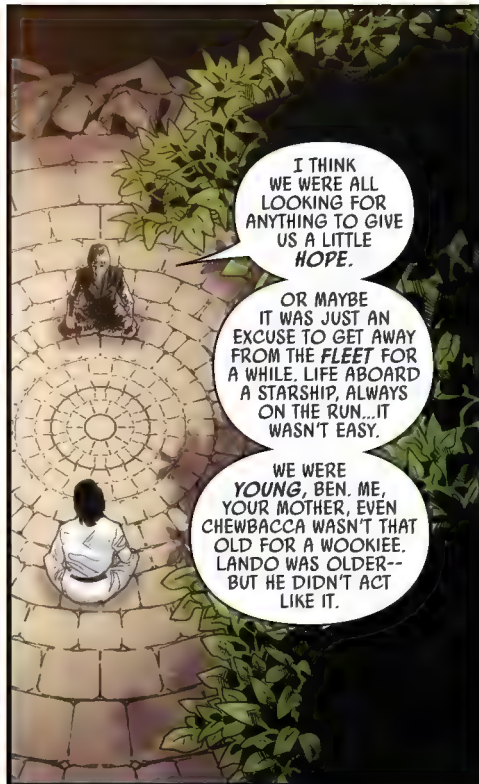
UH-HUH.



SO WHAT WAS IT? WHAT WAS THE THING THE FALLEN JEDI SENT YOU TO FIND?

WE DIDN'T KNOW--NOT THEN. ALL WE HAD WAS A SET OF COORDINATES.

THAT WAS ENOUGH TO GET US TO FIRE UP THE FALCON AND HEAD OUT.



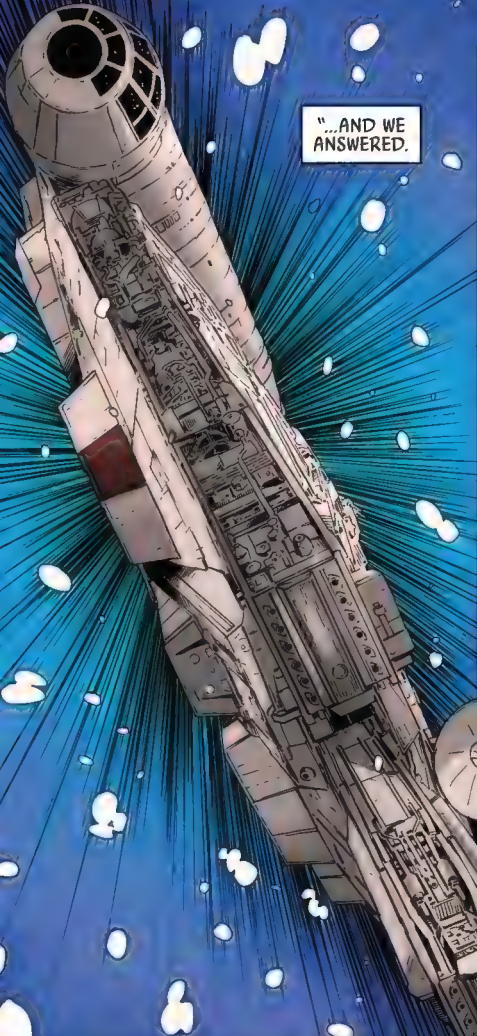
I THINK WE WERE ALL LOOKING FOR ANYTHING TO GIVE US A LITTLE **HOPE**.

OR MAYBE IT WAS JUST AN EXCUSE TO GET AWAY FROM THE **FLEET** FOR A WHILE. LIFE ABOARD A STARSHIP, ALWAYS ON THE RUN...IT WASN'T EASY.

WE WERE **YOUNG**, BEN. ME, YOUR MOTHER, EVEN CHEWBACCA WASN'T THAT OLD FOR A WOOKIEE. LANDO WAS OLDER-- BUT HE DIDN'T ACT LIKE IT.

SOMETIMES, ADVENTURE CALLED...



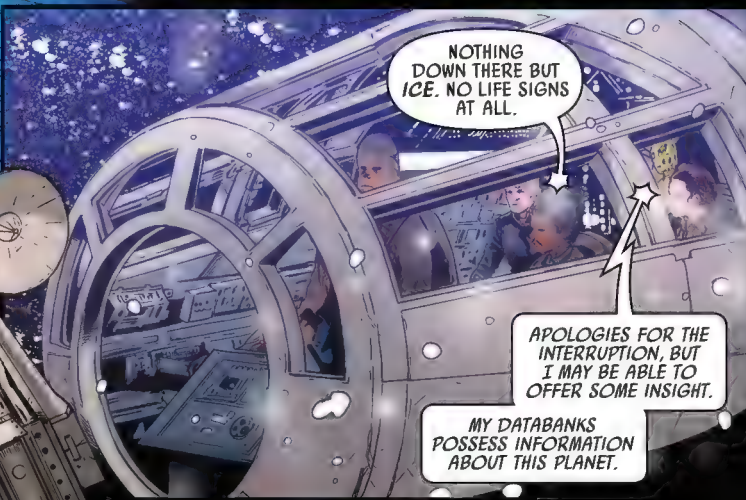


"...AND WE ANSWERED.



The Inner Rim.  
Niraya.

THOUGHT  
YOU SAID WE WERE  
LOOKING FOR A  
CITY, LUKE.



NOTHING  
DOWN THERE BUT  
ICE. NO LIFE SIGNS  
AT ALL.

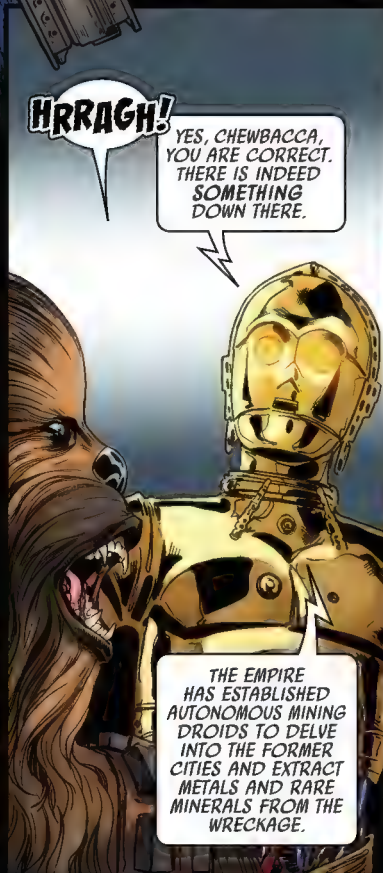
APOLOGIES FOR THE  
INTERRUPTION, BUT  
I MAY BE ABLE TO  
OFFER SOME INSIGHT.

MY DATABASES  
POSSESS INFORMATION  
ABOUT THIS PLANET.



CENTURIES AGO, THIS  
WORLD--NIRAYA--WAS  
INHABITED, WITH A  
NUMBER OF LARGE  
POPULATION CENTERS.

A GRAVITATIONAL  
ANOMALY PUSHED THE  
PLANET FAR FROM ITS  
ORIGINAL ORBIT,  
CAUSING IT TO FREEZE  
OVER. THE ICE IS NOW  
MANY KILOMETERS  
DEEP, THE WORLD  
ABANDONED.



**HRRAGH!**

YES, CHEWBACCA,  
YOU ARE CORRECT.  
THERE IS INDEED  
SOMETHING  
DOWN THERE.

THE EMPIRE  
HAS ESTABLISHED  
AUTONOMOUS MINING  
DROIDS TO DELVE  
INTO THE FORMER  
CITIES AND EXTRACT  
METALS AND RARE  
MINERALS FROM THE  
WRECKAGE.



SO ODDS  
ARE WHATEVER  
AZLIN RELL HID DOWN  
HERE IS BURIED UNDER  
A MOUNTAIN  
OF ICE.

INDEED, MASTER LUKE.  
I CALCULATE THOSE  
ODDS AT NEARLY ONE  
HUNDRED PERCENT.

WELL, I'LL  
PUT HER DOWN AT  
THE COORDINATES  
ANYWAY. YOU NEVER  
KNOW. WE MIGHT  
GET LUCKY.



"ARTOO--DETOO."

**B-DOOP  
BOO-WEEP!**

DON'T BE ABSURD, ARTOO. I DARESAY WE'LL NEED TO TAKE YOU IN FOR A THOROUGH DEBUGGING ONCE WE RETURN TO THE FLEET.



IT APPEARS WE DID NOT GET LUCKY, MASTER CALRISSIAN. AS I SAID, NEARLY ONE HUNDRED PERCENT.

SHUT IT, GOLDENROD.

"WE WERE STUCK. THE ARTIFACT WAS BURIED UNDER HALF A PLANET OF ICE, AND WE HAD NO IDEA HOW TO GET AT IT. EVEN USING A LIGHTSABER WOULD HAVE TAKEN YEARS.

"FORTUNATELY, WE HAD SOMETHING EVEN BETTER.

WHAT DID HE SAY, THREEPIO? ARTOO'S NEVER LET ME DOWN YET.

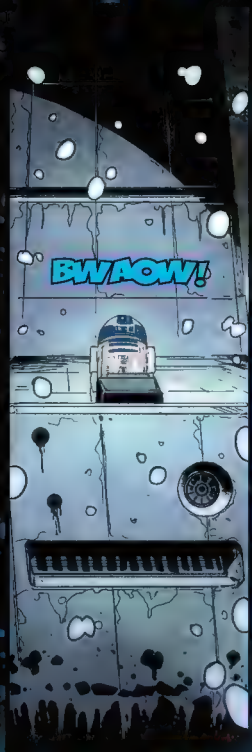
WELL, I'M AFRAID THERE IS A FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING, MISTRESS LEIA--BUT PERHAPS A CHUCKLE WOULD DO YOU GOOD.

ARTOO SUGGESTED WE SLICE ONE OF THE MINING DROIDNAUGHTS AND USE IT TO CARVE A PATH TO THE ARTIFACT.

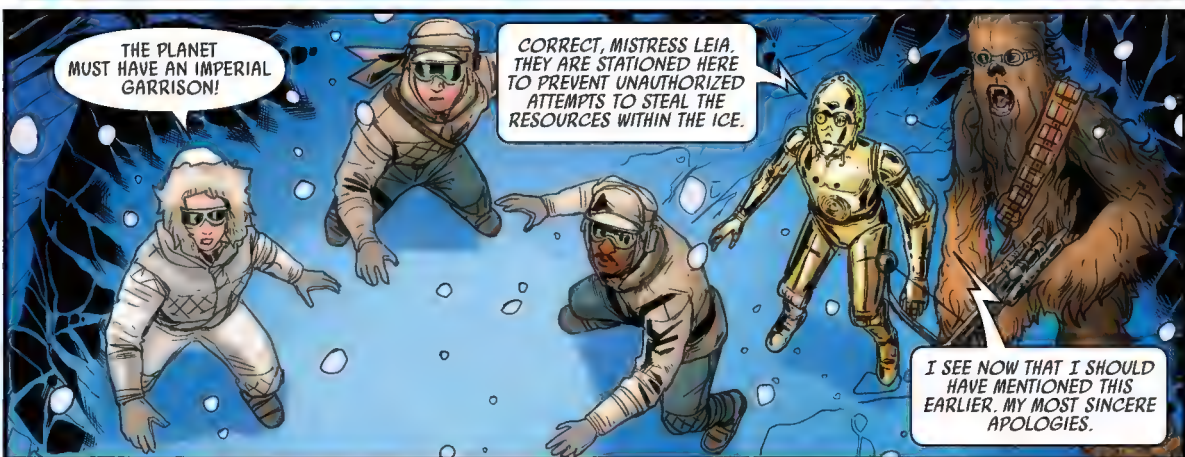
I MEAN... ANYONE HAVE A BETTER IDEA?



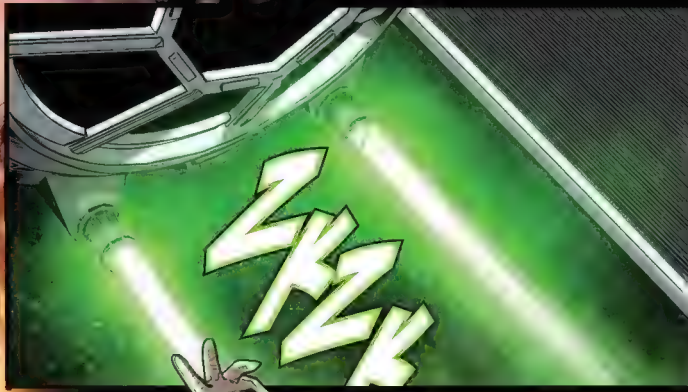
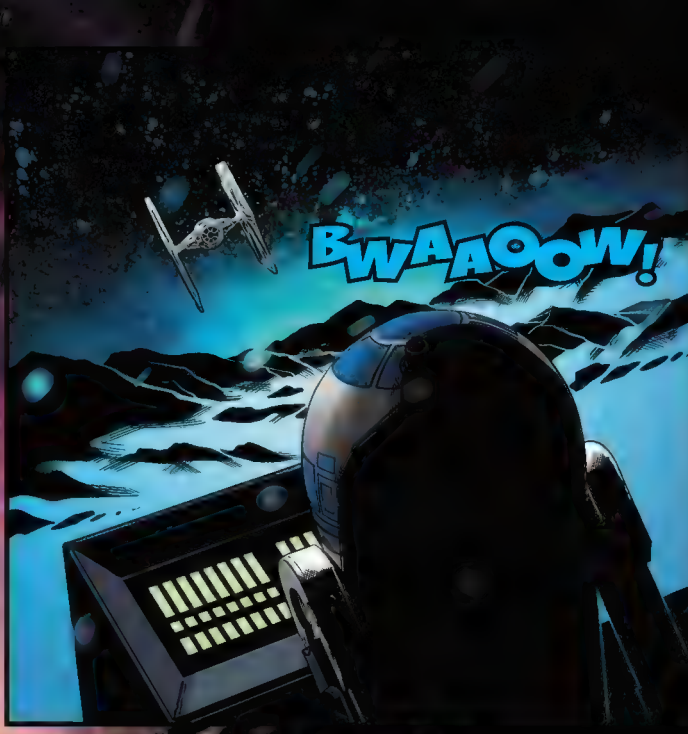




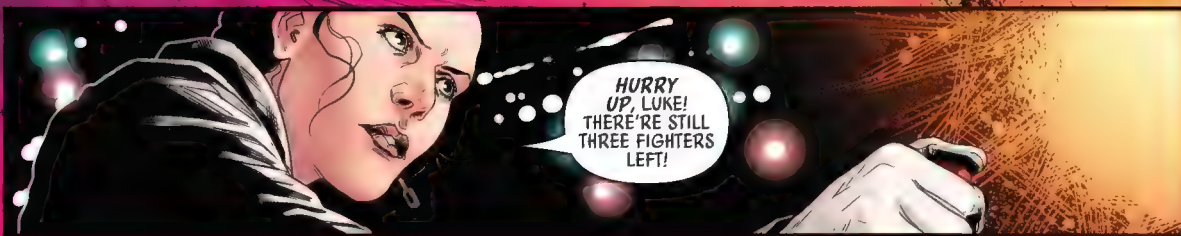
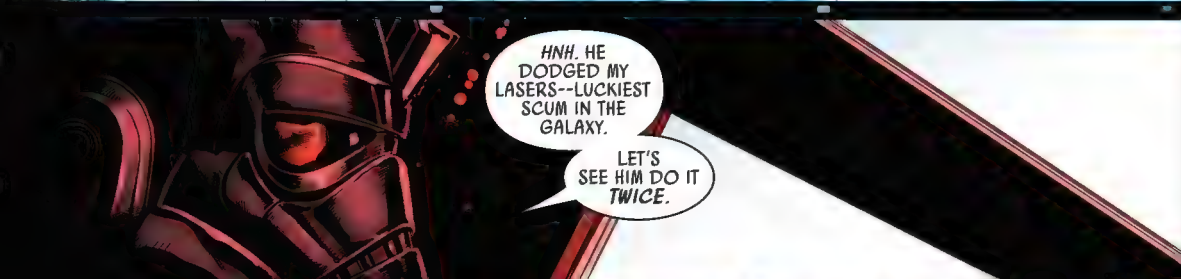
















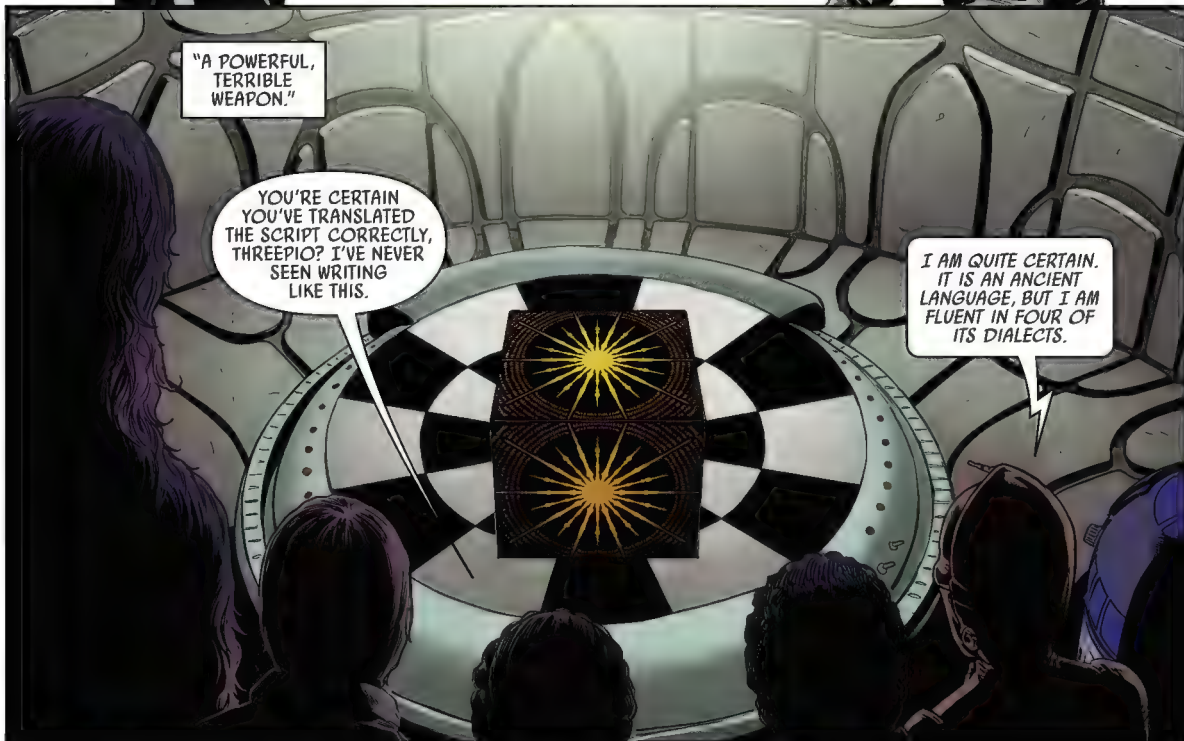




SO...WHAT WAS IT? I KNOW YOU'RE PLAYING UP THE SUSPENSE, MASTER-- IT'S A GOOD STORY, I GET IT.

BUT AT A CERTAIN POINT, STORIES ACTUALLY HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING, OR IT GETS BORING. TELL ME WHAT YOU FOUND!

A WEAPON, BEN. A VERY SPECIFIC KIND OF WEAPON.



"A POWERFUL, TERRIBLE WEAPON."

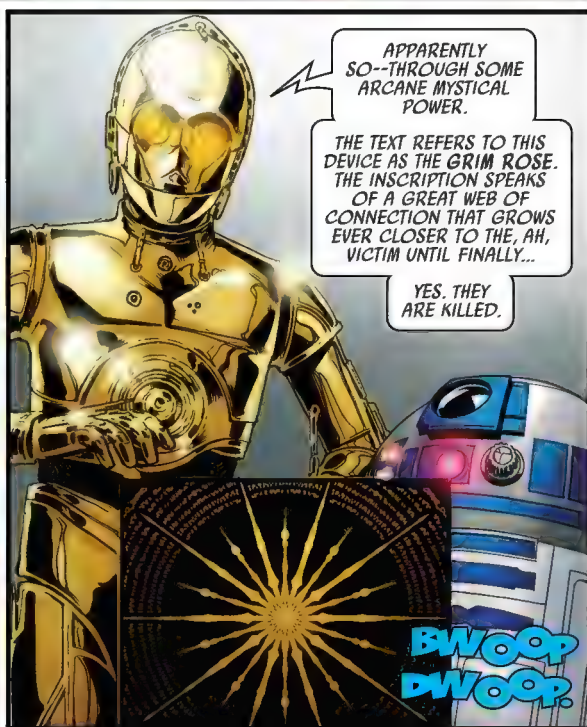
YOU'RE CERTAIN YOU'VE TRANSLATED THE SCRIPT CORRECTLY, THREEPIO? I'VE NEVER SEEN WRITING LIKE THIS.

I AM QUITE CERTAIN. IT IS AN ANCIENT LANGUAGE, BUT I AM FLUENT IN FOUR OF ITS DIALECTS.



SO WE GIVE IT THE GENETIC MATERIAL FROM A PERSON, A PERSON ANYWHERE...

...AND IT KILLS THEM?



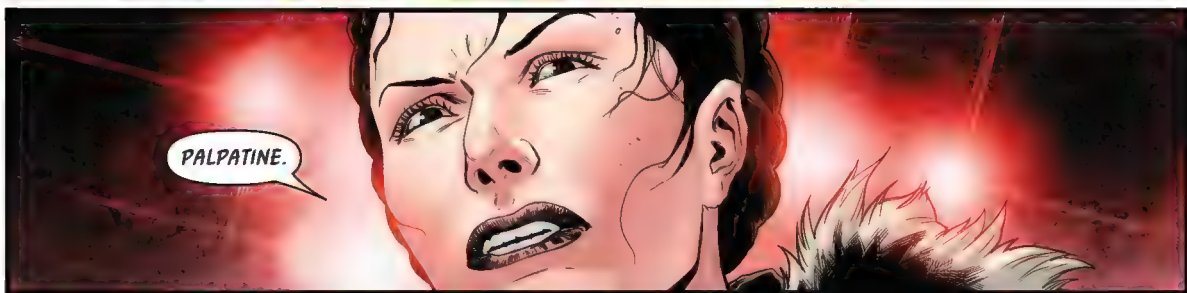
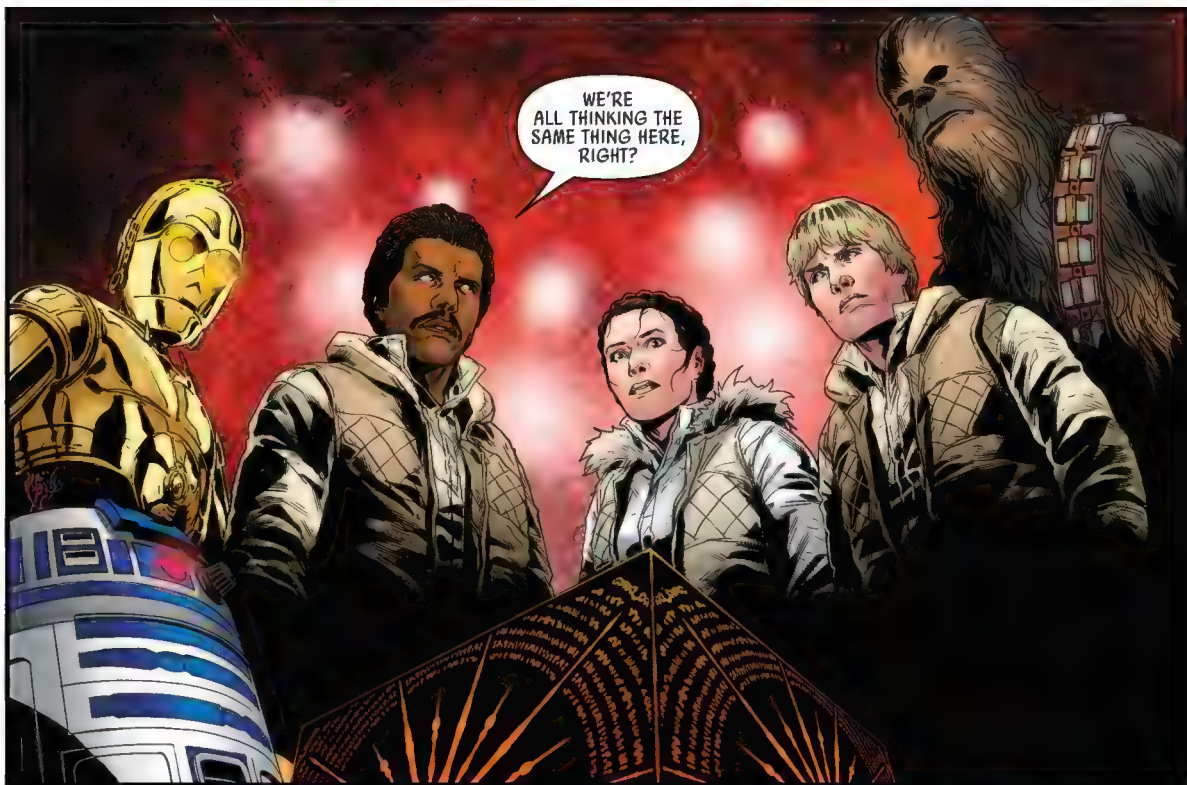
APPARENTLY SO--THROUGH SOME ARCAINE MYSTICAL POWER.

THE TEXT REFERS TO THIS DEVICE AS THE GRIM ROSE. THE INSCRIPTION SPEAKS OF A GREAT WEB OF CONNECTION THAT GROWS EVER CLOSER TO THE, AH, VICTIM UNTIL FINALLY...

YES. THEY ARE KILLED.

BWOOP  
DWOOP







**Part II:**

**You may fire when ready.**



SO YOU FOUND THIS BOX THAT COULD SUPPOSEDLY TAKE OUT THE **EMPEROR**... BUT YOU NEEDED SOME OF HIS **BLOOD** OR SOMETHING TO MAKE IT WORK?

HOW WERE YOU SUPPOSED TO GET **THAT**? FROM THE LITTLE BIT I'VE HEARD ABOUT PALPATINE, HE DIDN'T LET ANYONE **NEAR** HIM.

ACTUALLY, BEN...

"...YOUR MOM FIGURED IT OUT."

WE NEED TO GO TO **NABOO**.

NABOO? LAST I HEARD, THAT PLANET'S IMPERIAL THROUGH AND THROUGH. THEY GOT RID OF ITS MILITARY AND ITS MONARCHY AND INSTALLED A **MOFF** TO RUN THINGS.

DANGEROUS PLACE FOR THE HEROES OF THE REBEL ALLIANCE.

IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT NABOO IS, LANDO. IT'S ABOUT WHAT IT **WAS**.

THE HOME PLANET OF FORMER SENATOR, FORMER CHANCELLOR AND CURRENT EMPEROR **SHEEV PALPATINE**.

OKAY...BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN HE'S THERE **NOW**.

LET ME EXPLAIN. WHEN A PERSON BECOMES A SENATOR, THEY'RE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE GENETIC SAMPLES TO AID WITH BIOMETRIC IDENTIFICATION WHILE THEY SERVE. **TWO SETS**.

WHEN A SENATOR'S TERM ENDS, THEY'RE DESTROYED. BUT SINCE PALPATINE NEVER TECHNICALLY **STOPPED** BEING A MEMBER OF THE SENATE...

...THERE'S A CHANCE HIS SAMPLES ON NABOO ARE STILL THERE.

THAT'S GENIUS, LEIA!



Theed. Capital city of Naboo.



GOOD JOB WITH THOSE TRANSPONDER CODES, CHEWIE. IMPERIAL TRAFFIC CONTROL THINKS THE FALCON'S JUST ANOTHER FREIGHTER.

HWEEEARGH!



WHERE ARE WE SUPPOSED TO LOOK? THIS IS A BIG CITY.

**B-BEEP  
B-BEEP  
BEEP!**

ARTOO BELIEVES HE KNOWS WHERE THE RECORDS WOULD BE KEPT--THE FORMER ROYAL ARCHIVES.

WHY HE SEEMS SO CERTAIN I HAVE NO IDEA, THOUGH I SUPPOSE THE BASIC IDEA IS PLAUSIBLE. BUT I SHOULD CAUTION YOU--IT IS MOST LIKELY AN IMPERIAL FACILITY NOW.



OH, THAT'S JUST FINE, THREEPIO.

I'LL BLEND RIGHT IN.











"...I'LL IMPROVISE."

HMM.  
RECORDS.



SOUNDS  
ABOUT  
RIGHT.

HELLO, SIR.  
HOW MAY I ASSIST  
YOU TODAY?

I'VE BEEN  
SENT TO RETRIEVE A  
PARTICULAR RECORD--  
MY SUPERIOR OFFICER SAYS  
YOU'VE GOT IT. NOT  
MUCH MORE TO IT  
THAN THAT.

THIS IS  
**SENSITIVE MATERIAL.**  
PLEASE DON'T KEEP  
ME WAITING.



OF COURSE,  
SIR. DO YOU HAVE  
A RECORD LOCATOR  
NUMBER FOR  
ME?

THE FILING  
SYSTEM IS **YOUR**  
BUSINESS, NOT MINE.  
I HAVE A NAME, AND  
THAT'S ALL YOU  
SHOULD NEED.

IT'S A NAME  
I'M SURE YOU'LL  
RECOGNIZE, AND WHEN  
YOU HEAR IT, I'M EQUALLY  
CERTAIN YOU'LL UNDERSTAND  
THE NEED FOR BOTH  
**DISCRETION**  
AND **HASTE.**



PALPATINE.



AH.













SO WHAT NOW, MY SHARP-EYED FRIEND? HOW ABOUT YOU TAKE YOUR HAND OFF THAT ALARM, COME AROUND THE DESK, AND WE'LL WALK OUT TOGETHER?

ONCE WE'RE OUTSIDE, I'LL LET YOU GO, AND WE'LL BOTH GET ON WITH OUR LIVES.

I HAVE A BETTER IDEA.

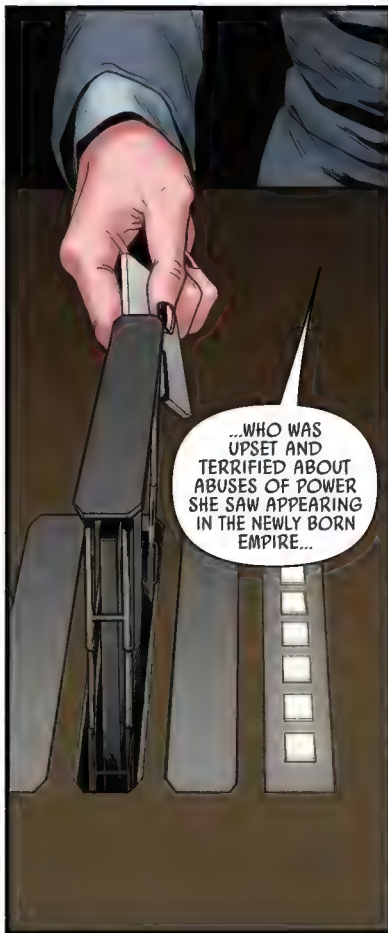


I ASK MYSELF... WHAT KIND OF PERSON WOULD WALK IN HERE ASKING FOR SENSITIVE GENETIC DATA ABOUT OUR GLORIOUS EMPEROR? WHAT WOULD THEY WANT IT FOR?

NOTHING GOOD, OF COURSE. YOU COULD ASSUME A PERSON LIKE THAT WAS, IN FACT, AN *ENEMY* OF THE EMPEROR. A *REBELLIOUS* SORT.



THE KIND OF PERSON, IN FACT, WHO MIGHT SYMPATHIZE WITH AND UNDERSTAND A LOWLY RECORDS CLERK IN THE ROYAL ARCHIVES ON NABOO...



...WHO WAS UPSET AND TERRIFIED ABOUT ABUSES OF POWER SHE SAW APPEARING IN THE NEWLY BORN EMPIRE...



...AND THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE PRUDENT TO SECRETE AWAY PORTIONS OF CERTAIN *SENSITIVE* MATERIAL UNDER HER CONTROL. JUST IN CASE.

YOU...MIGHT BE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PERSON I'VE EVER MET. I COULD KISS YOU.



NO, THANK YOU. I AM VERY HAPPILY MARRIED.

BUT YOU *CAN* DO SOMETHING ELSE FOR ME.



USE THIS  
TO KILL THAT  
MONSTER.

REMOVE HIS  
STAIN FROM THIS  
GALAXY. HELP FREE  
THIS WORLD AND ALL  
THE OTHER WORLDS  
PALPATINE HAS  
UNDER HIS  
BOOT.



WHOA.  
TOUGH  
LADY.

VERY  
TOUGH.

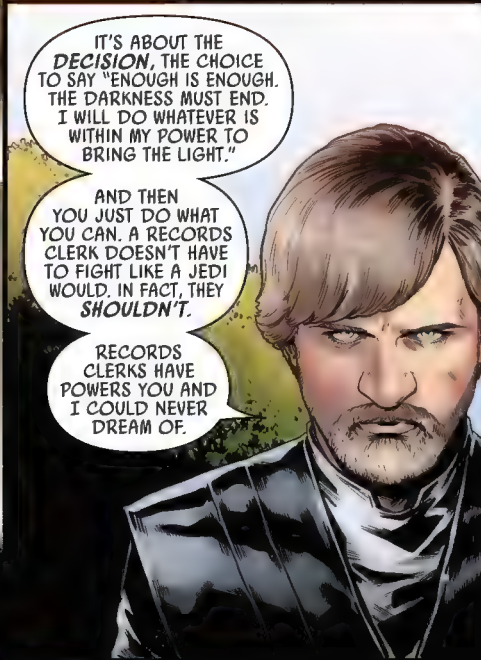
WE DIDN'T  
JUST BEAT THE  
EMPIRE WITH BLASTERS  
AND LIGHTSABERS,  
BEN. THERE ARE  
MANY WAYS TO  
FIGHT.



IT'S ABOUT THE  
**DECISION**, THE CHOICE  
TO SAY "ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.  
THE DARKNESS MUST END.  
I WILL DO WHATEVER IS  
WITHIN MY POWER TO  
BRING THE LIGHT."

AND THEN  
YOU JUST DO WHAT  
YOU CAN. A RECORDS  
CLERK DOESN'T HAVE  
TO FIGHT LIKE A JEDI  
WOULD. IN FACT, THEY  
**SHOULDN'T**.

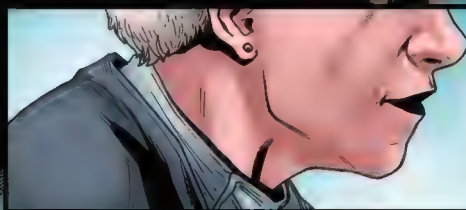
RECORDS  
CLERKS HAVE  
POWERS YOU AND  
I COULD NEVER  
DREAM OF.



SERIOUSLY?



"SERIOUSLY,  
BEN.



"EVERYONE IS  
STRONG IN THEIR  
OWN WAY."





YOU'RE SURE THIS IS THE EMPEROR'S SAMPLE?

IF IT'S NOT, THAT LADY WAS A BETTER LIAR THAN I AM-- AND I CAN'T SEE THE ANGLE FOR HER TO TRICK ME.

NO, LEIA, I'M PRETTY SURE THIS IS THE REAL DEAL.

OKAY, **NOW** WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT THE ETHICS HERE.

WE DON'T REALLY KNOW HOW THIS THING **WORKS** OR EVEN IF IT **DOES** WORK.



NOT TO MENTION...THE EMPIRE WON'T NECESSARILY FALL EVEN IF THE EMPEROR DIES. THERE'S STILL VADER, PLUS THE GENERALS, THE BUREAUCRACY, THE **WEAPONS**.

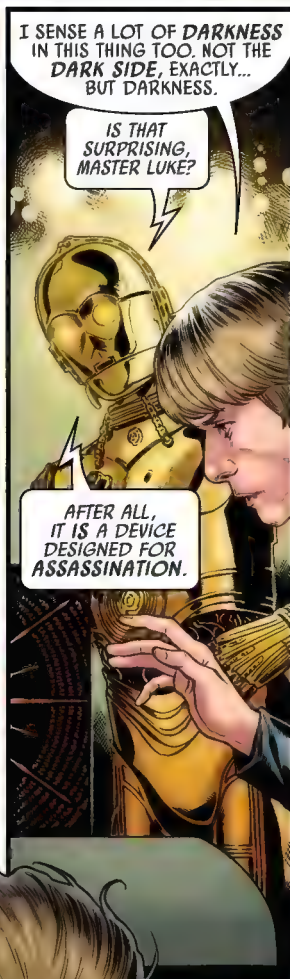
SURE, BUT IT'LL TAKE A HIT. IT'LL TEETER ON ITS AXIS--MIGHT BE A CHANCE TO MAKE IT ALL FALL OVER.



I SENSE A LOT OF **DARKNESS** IN THIS THING TOO. NOT THE **DARK SIDE**, EXACTLY... BUT **DARKNESS**.

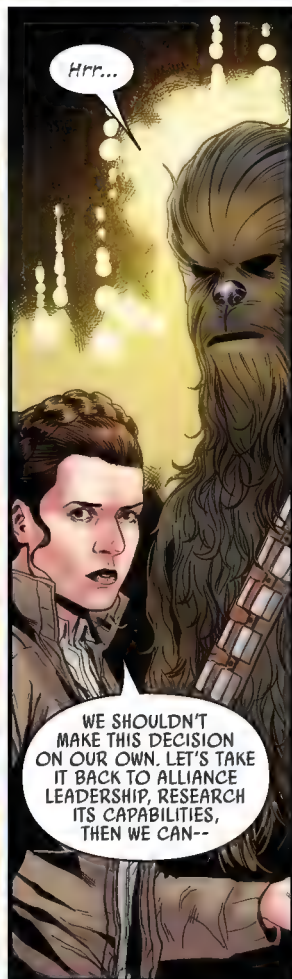
IS THAT SURPRISING, MASTER LUKE?

AFTER ALL, IT IS A DEVICE DESIGNED FOR ASSASSINATION.



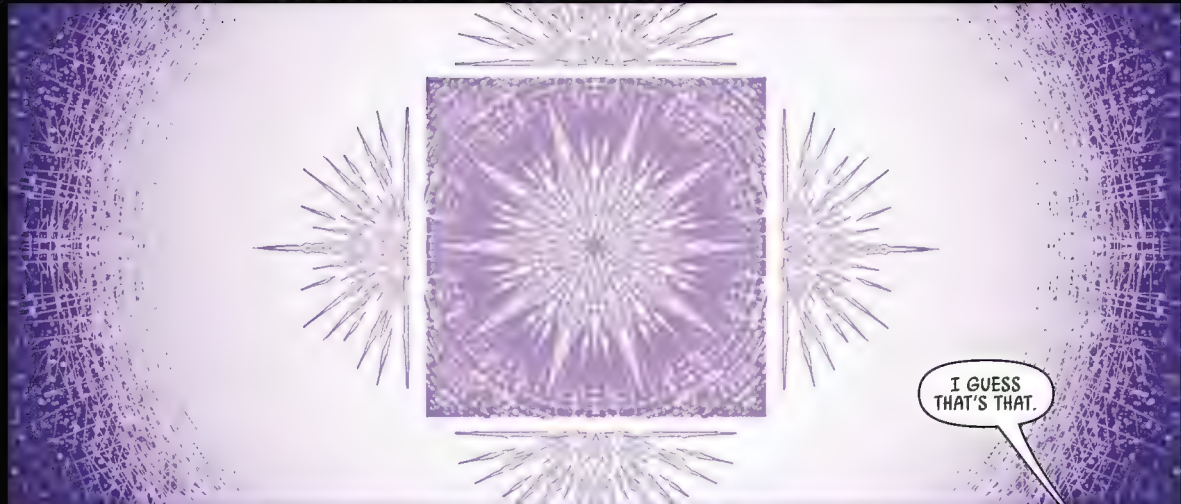
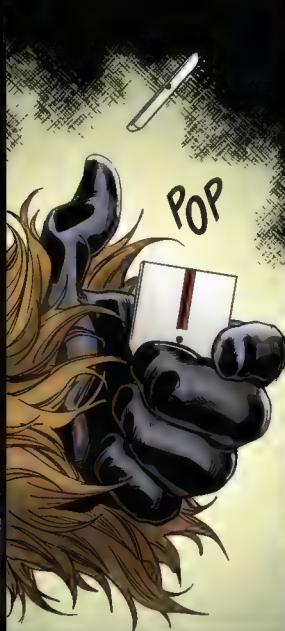
Hrr...

WE SHOULDN'T MAKE THIS DECISION ON OUR OWN. LET'S TAKE IT BACK TO ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP, RESEARCH ITS CAPABILITIES, THEN WE CAN--



**HRRON!**







**Part III:**

**Commence primary ignition.**





Hrooarrh.

HREEarrgh?  
Hoo?

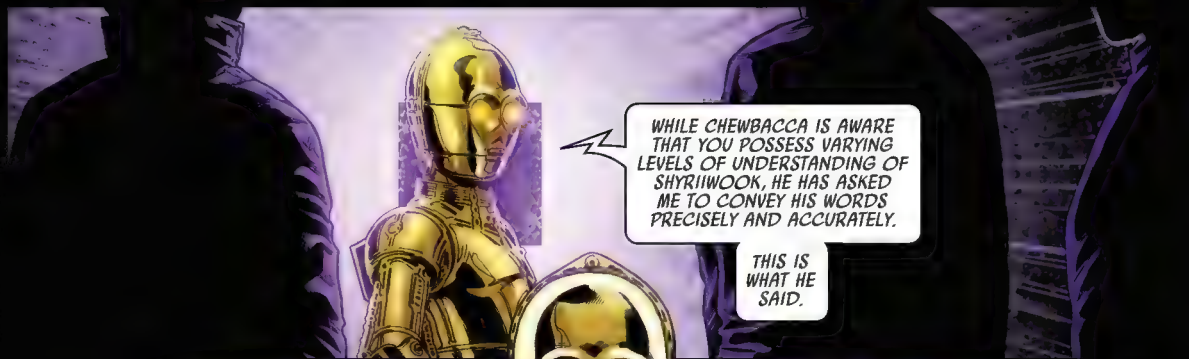


Hrrrrrr.  
Rrrrrgh.  
GRRRAARRR.  
Herrraaa!



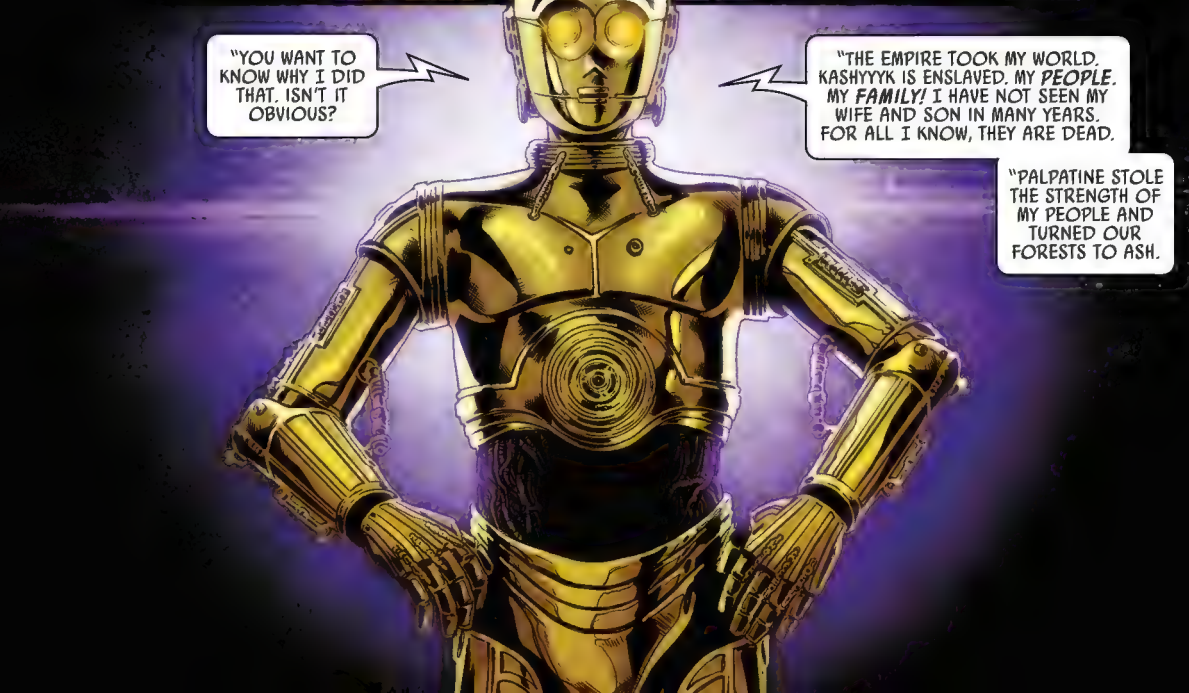
Nnh.

OF COURSE,  
CHEWBACCA.  
IT WOULD BE MY  
GREAT PLEASURE  
TO TRANSLATE.



WHILE CHEWBACCA IS AWARE  
THAT YOU POSSESS VARYING  
LEVELS OF UNDERSTANDING OF  
SHYRIIWOOK, HE HAS ASKED  
ME TO CONVEY HIS WORDS  
PRECISELY AND ACCURATELY.

THIS IS  
WHAT HE  
SAID.

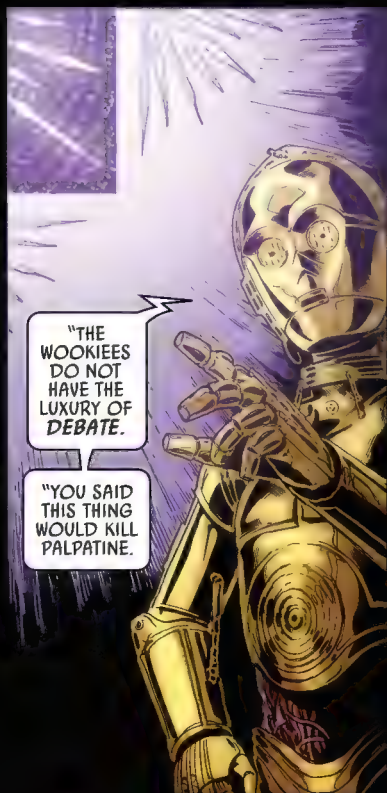


"YOU WANT TO  
KNOW WHY I DID  
THAT. ISN'T IT  
OBVIOUS?"

"THE EMPIRE TOOK MY WORLD.  
KASHYYYK IS ENSLAVED. MY PEOPLE.  
MY FAMILY! I HAVE NOT SEEN MY  
WIFE AND SON IN MANY YEARS.  
FOR ALL I KNOW, THEY ARE DEAD.

"PALPATINE STOLE  
THE STRENGTH OF  
MY PEOPLE AND  
TURNED OUR  
FORESTS TO ASH.





"THE WOOKIEES DO NOT HAVE THE LUXURY OF DEBATE."

"YOU SAID THIS THING WOULD KILL PALPATINE."

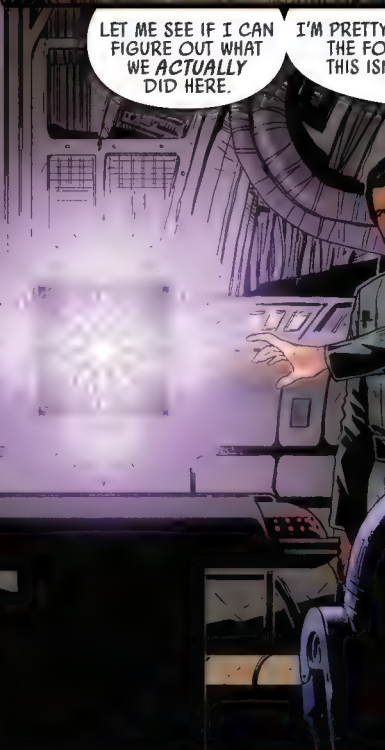


"SO I KILLED HIM."



"I UNDERSTAND, CHEWBACCA. I THINK WE ALL DO."

"MAYBE YOU DID WHAT WE COULDN'T."



"LET ME SEE IF I CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT WE ACTUALLY DID HERE."

"I'M PRETTY SURE THIS THING WORKS THROUGH THE FORCE. IT'S NOT TECHNOLOGY-- THIS ISN'T SCIENCE--BUT THERE'S SOME PROCESS GOING ON."



"IT FEELS LIKE...I'M SENSING..."

"...IT'S LIKE IT'S SEARCHING."





"I CAN...SEE  
SOMETHING.  
SOMEONE."

"A WOMAN. SHE'S IN A  
GARDEN. LOOKS LIKE  
NABOO. SHE...*KNEW*  
PALPATINE, I THINK.  
WORKED FOR HIM."

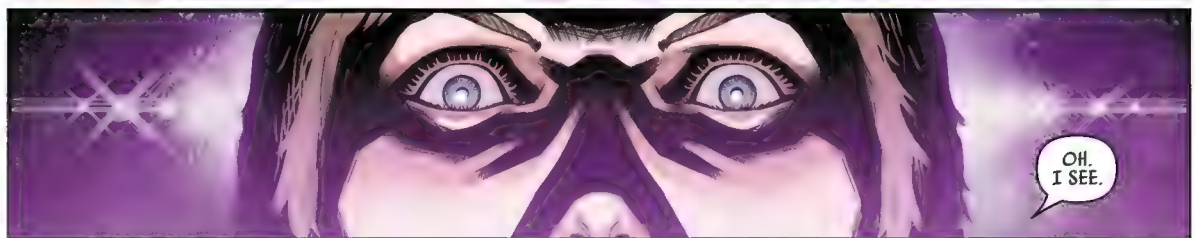


"THAT'S NOT...  
WHAT DO YOU  
MEAN, LUKE?"

"I'M NOT SURE  
YET. IT'S STILL SEARCHING.  
I NEED TO CONCENTRATE.  
THIS IS DIFFICULT."

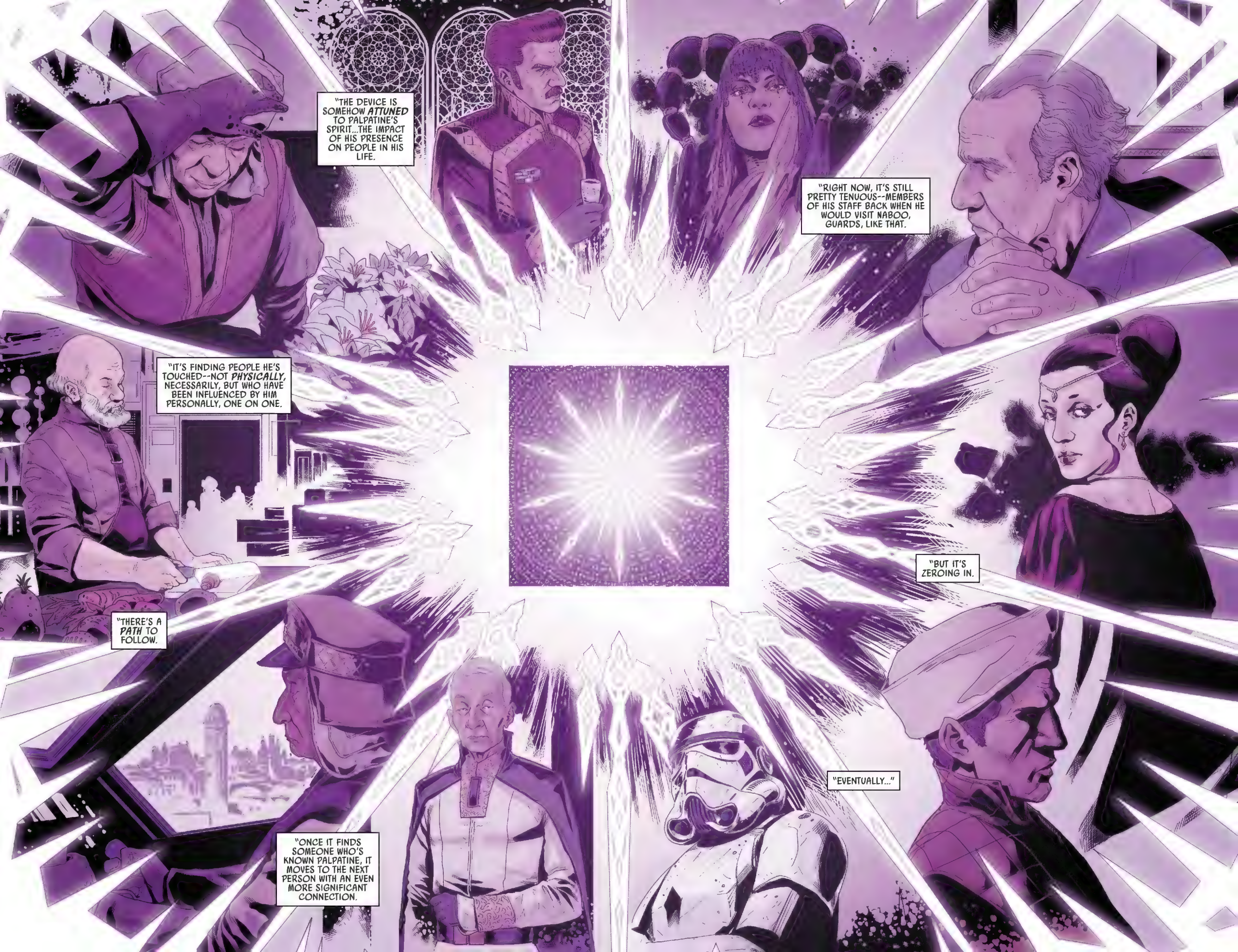


"IT'S...MOVED  
ON. IT'S FOLLOWING  
SOME KIND OF *PATH*.  
LIKE IT KNOWS WHERE  
TO GO."



"OH.  
I SEE."





"THE DEVICE IS SOMEHOW ATTUNED TO PALPATINE'S SPIRIT...THE IMPACT OF HIS PRESENCE ON PEOPLE IN HIS LIFE."

"RIGHT NOW, IT'S STILL PRETTY TENUOUS--MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF BACK WHEN HE WOULD VISIT NABOO, GUARDS, LIKE THAT."

"IT'S FINDING PEOPLE HE'S TOUCHED--NOT PHYSICALLY, NECESSARILY, BUT WHO HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY HIM PERSONALLY, ONE ON ONE."

"THERE'S A PATH TO FOLLOW."

"BUT IT'S ZEROING IN."

"EVENTUALLY..."

"ONCE IT FINDS SOMEONE WHO'S KNOWN PALPATINE, IT MOVES TO THE NEXT PERSON WITH AN EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT CONNECTION."





...IT'LL  
FIND  
HIM.

AND  
THEN IT'S  
OVER.

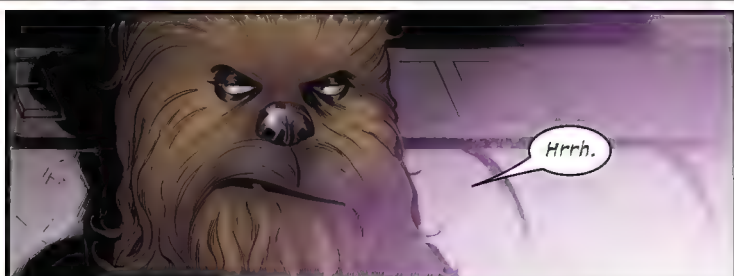


SO WE  
JUST NEED TO  
WAIT? HOW LONG  
DO YOU THINK IT  
WILL TAKE?

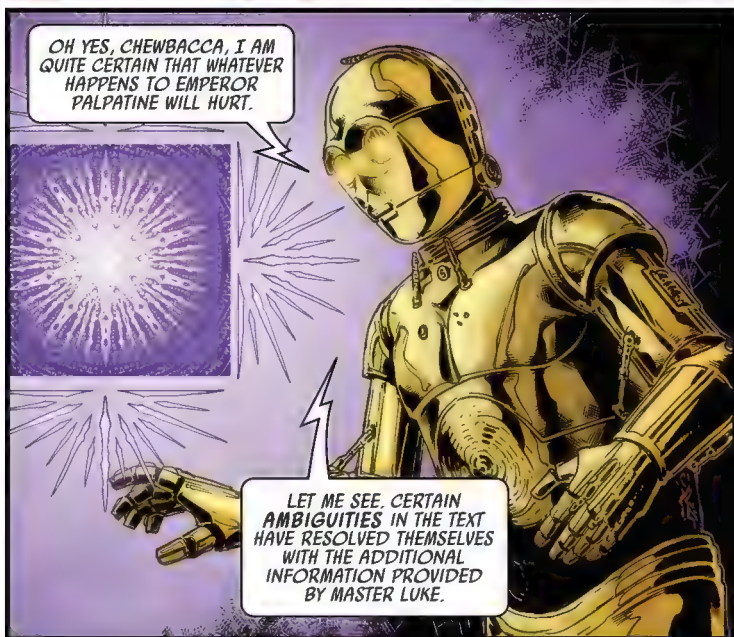


THE GALAXY IS IMMENSE, AND AN  
INDIVIDUAL SUCH AS THE EMPEROR  
HAS PRESUMABLY INFLUENCED MANY  
PEOPLE. I WOULD IMAGINE IT COULD  
TAKE THE MECHANISM SOME TIME.

WHAT WILL  
ACTUALLY HAPPEN  
THOUGH? WHAT WILL  
IT DO ONCE IT  
FINDS HIM?



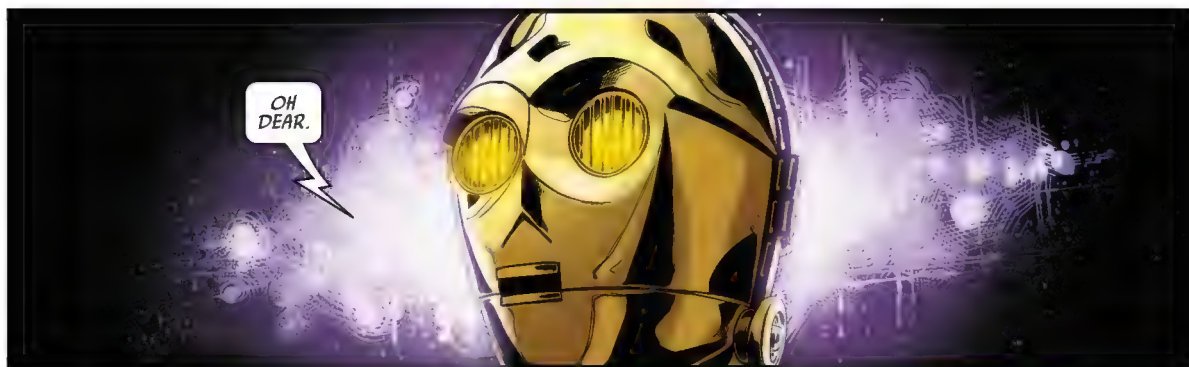
Hrrh.



OH YES, CHEWBACCA, I AM  
QUITE CERTAIN THAT WHATEVER  
HAPPENS TO EMPEROR  
PALPATINE WILL HURT.

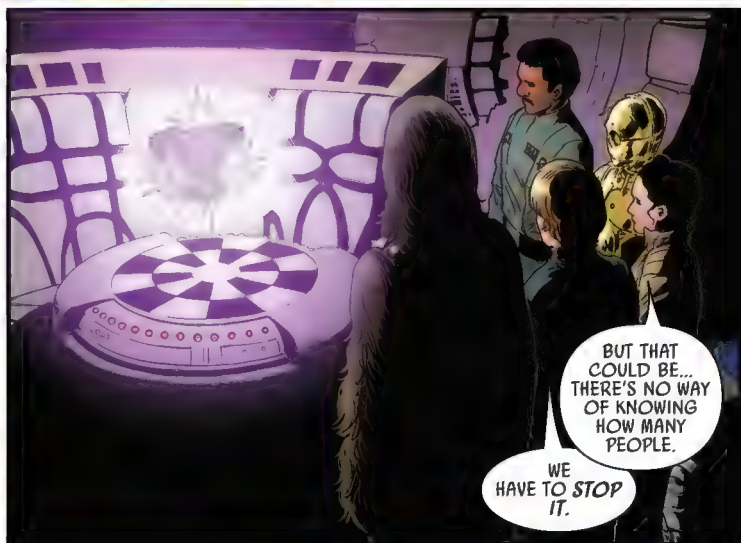
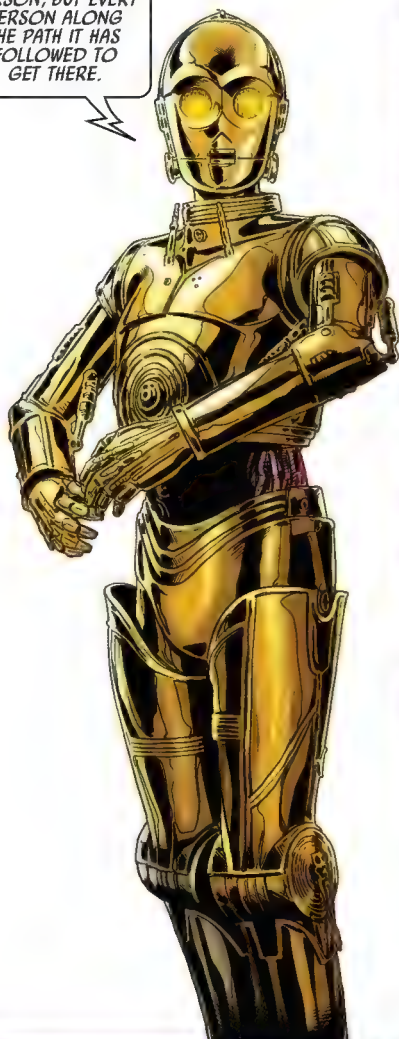
LET ME SEE. CERTAIN  
AMBIGUITIES IN THE TEXT  
HAVE RESOLVED THEMSELVES  
WITH THE ADDITIONAL  
INFORMATION PROVIDED  
BY MASTER LUKE.





OH  
DEAR.

THE END STATE OF  
THE MECHANISM...  
ONCE IT FINDS ITS  
TARGET...IT WILL  
NOT JUST KILL THAT  
PERSON, BUT EVERY  
PERSON ALONG  
THE PATH IT HAS  
FOLLOWED TO  
GET THERE.



BUT THAT  
COULD BE...  
THERE'S NO WAY  
OF KNOWING  
HOW MANY  
PEOPLE.

WE  
HAVE TO STOP  
IT.



THERE  
MUST BE  
AN OFF  
SWITCH.



NO,  
LUKE.



LET IT  
RUN.



HOW MANY  
PEOPLE HAS THAT  
MONSTER KILLED IN  
HIS LIFETIME?

HOW MANY  
**MORE** WILL  
HE KILL?



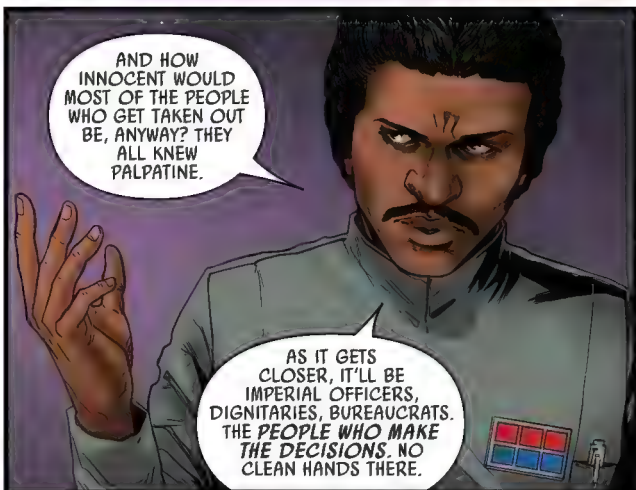
YOU WANT  
ANOTHER **ALDERAAN**,  
PRINCESS?

HELL, DON'T  
YOU WANT TO **AVENGE**  
**ALDERAAN**?



AND HOW  
INNOCENT WOULD  
MOST OF THE PEOPLE  
WHO GET TAKEN OUT  
BE, ANYWAY? THEY  
ALL KNEW  
PALPATINE.

AS IT GETS  
CLOSER, IT'LL BE  
IMPERIAL OFFICERS,  
DIGNITARIES, BUREAUCRATS.  
THE **PEOPLE WHO MAKE**  
THE **DECISIONS**. NO  
CLEAN HANDS THERE.

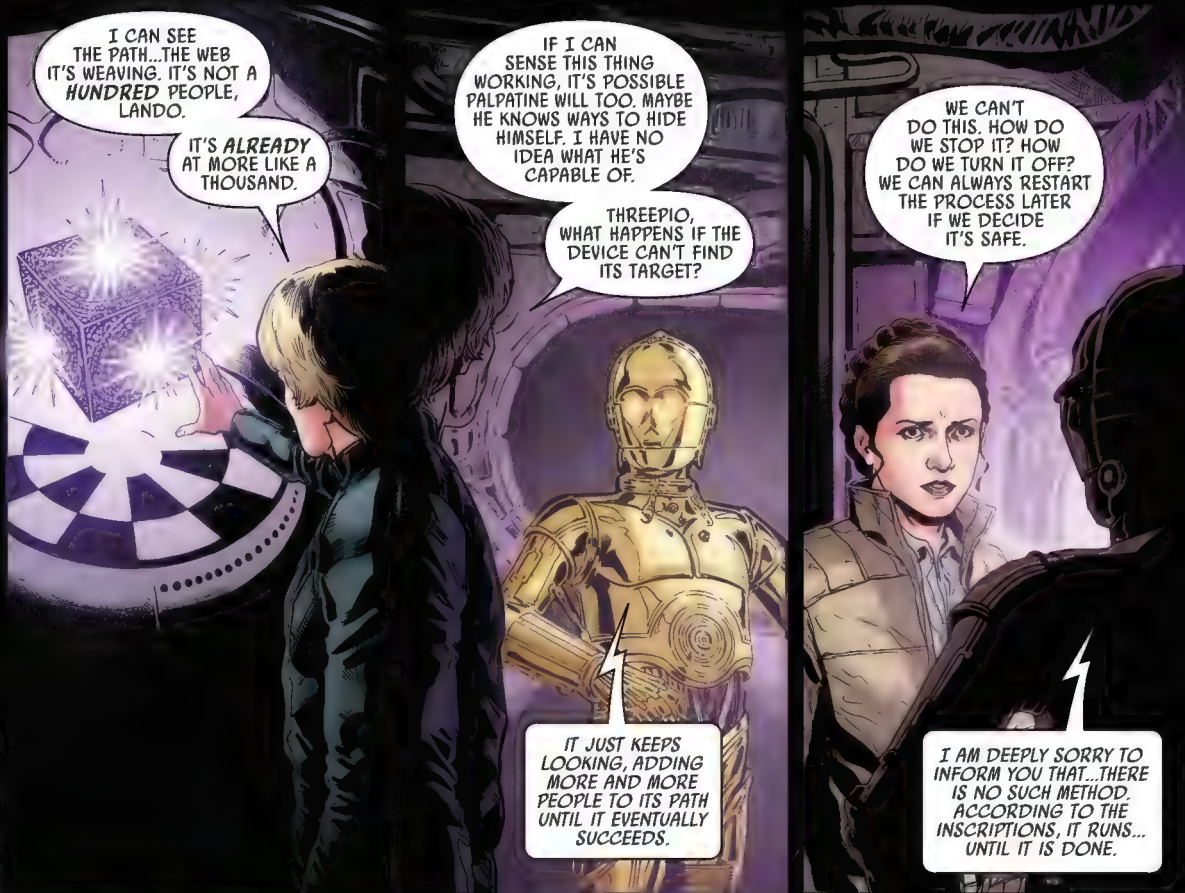


I DON'T  
CARE IF IT KILLS A  
**HUNDRED** PEOPLE.  
IT'S WORTH IT.

LET IT  
RUN.







I CAN SEE THE PATH...THE WEB IT'S WEAVING. IT'S NOT A HUNDRED PEOPLE, LANDO.

IT'S ALREADY AT MORE LIKE A THOUSAND.

IF I CAN SENSE THIS THING WORKING, IT'S POSSIBLE PALPATINE WILL TOO. MAYBE HE KNOWS WAYS TO HIDE HIMSELF. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HE'S CAPABLE OF.

THREEPIO, WHAT HAPPENS IF THE DEVICE CAN'T FIND ITS TARGET?

WE CAN'T DO THIS. HOW DO WE STOP IT? HOW DO WE TURN IT OFF? WE CAN ALWAYS RESTART THE PROCESS LATER IF WE DECIDE IT'S SAFE.

IT JUST KEEPS LOOKING, ADDING MORE AND MORE PEOPLE TO ITS PATH UNTIL IT EVENTUALLY SUCCEEDS.

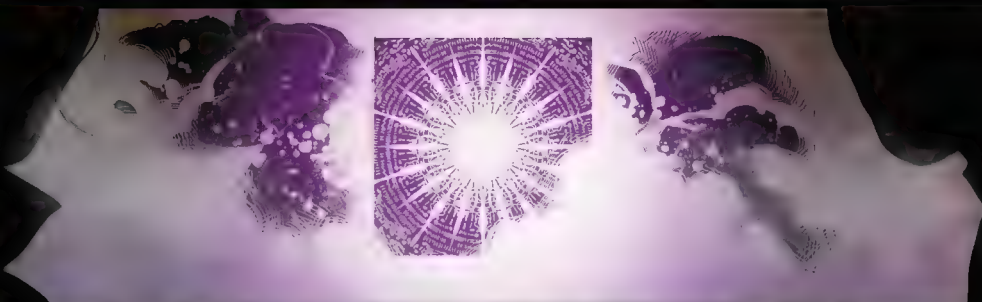
I AM DEEPLY SORRY TO INFORM YOU THAT...THERE IS NO SUCH METHOD. ACCORDING TO THE INSCRIPTIONS, IT RUNS... UNTIL IT IS DONE.



WE'LL SEE.

SILKREK







## Part IV:

As if millions of voices cried out in terror,





YOU  
DIDN'T TELL  
THEM?

DIDN'T  
TELL THEM  
WHAT?

THAT IF  
THAT MACHINE  
KEPT GOING, IT  
COULD KILL **DARTH**  
**VADER** TOO. I MEAN,  
NO ONE WAS  
CLOSER TO  
PALPATINE.

IT COULD  
HAVE ENDED  
THE SITH IN  
ONE GO!

MAYBE. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT  
WOULD HAVE HAPPENED. I DID  
THINK ABOUT IT--BUT I WASN'T  
SURE HOW I FELT.

I KNEW I  
HAD TO CONFRONT  
VADER, BUT THAT DIDN'T  
MEAN HE HAD TO **DIE**.  
I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK  
I COULD REDEEM HIM.  
I'D SENSED THERE  
WAS STILL GOOD  
IN HIM.

LOOKING BACK, I HAD NO REAL REASON  
TO BELIEVE THAT. THE CONFIDENCE OF  
YOUTH, THE INEVITABILITY OF HAPPY  
ENDINGS. I **WANTED** IT TO BE TRUE,  
SO IT HAD TO BE TRUE.

PALPATINE  
WOULD HAVE LAUGHED  
AT ME. ACTUALLY, HE DID,  
WHEN I FACED HIM  
LATER.

BUT LET  
ME FINISH  
THE STORY. IT'S  
ALMOST  
DONE.



Gazian.



DO YOU  
THINK YOU'LL BE  
ABLE TO FIND AZLIN  
RELL AGAIN,  
LUKE?

I HAVE  
NO IDEA, LEIA. THE  
FUNGUS SHOWED ME  
SOMEONE DIFFERENT EACH  
TIME. I THINK THE PLANET  
WILL DO WHAT IT  
WANTS--BUT WE  
HAVE TO TRY.

IT'S THE  
ONLY WAY I COULD  
THINK OF TO GET MORE  
INFORMATION ABOUT  
THE DEVICE.



NOTHING BUT  
CONFIDENCE AND  
SUPPORT FOR  
YOU, LUKE.

BUT I'M  
GOING TO  
SEND YOU ALL THAT  
FROM INSIDE THE  
FALCON.

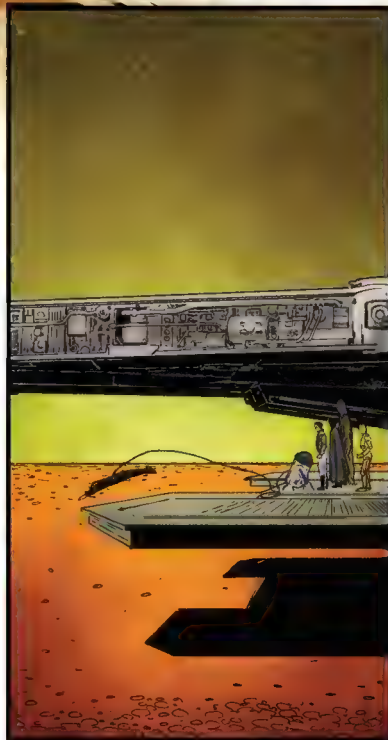


BE SAFE, LUKE. THIS  
SEEMS INCREDIBLY  
DANGEROUS.

NEVER  
STOPPED US  
BEFORE.



AZLIN  
RELL.





AH, YOU RETURN ONCE AGAIN, SKYWALKER. YOU SEEM TO FIND THIS PLACE DEEPLY FASCINATING.

YOU REALLY SHOULD JUST CONSIDER STAYING HERE.

NO, I POSSESS NEITHER THE APTITUDE NOR THE FORTITUDE FOR THAT PATH.

I AM MERELY AN EXPLORER. MY NAME IS LOR.

ARE YOU... A JEDI?



WHAT? NO WAY. HAD YOU MET HIM IN REAL LIFE YET?

NO, AND I WOULDN'T FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. IT WAS JUST...ONE OF THOSE ODD AND STRANGE CONJUNCTIONS THIS GALAXY SOMETIMES LIKES TO OFFER UP.

IT'S SO BIG BUT ALSO SO VERY SMALL.

I NEED TO SPEAK TO THE PERSON I TALKED TO LAST TIME. AZLIN RELL.

OR... ARE YOU ALSO HIM?



I AM, BUT I AM ALSO NOT. IT IS MY TURN, SKYWALKER, TO DISCUSS AND LEARN ABOUT THE THINGS THAT INTEREST ME.

WE WAIT SO LONG HERE.

LISTEN. I'LL COME BACK--WE CAN TALK ABOUT ANYTHING YOU WANT.

BUT I NEED TO SPEAK TO AZLIN RELL.



YOU'VE DONE SOMETHING, HAVEN'T YOU?



SOMETHING VERY BAD.







VERY GOOD.



YOU ACTIVATED THE DEVICE. TELL ME... DOES IT WORK? WHO DID YOU CHOOSE AS YOUR TARGET?

TELL ME EVERYTHING.

I WILL, BUT CAN IT BE STOPPED? TURNED OFF?

OF COURSE NOT. IT RUNS UNTIL IT FINDS ITS TARGET, AND THEN... THE CASCADE.

ALL THOSE DEATHS, ALL AT ONCE. I LOVE LIFE, OF COURSE, BUT STILL, IT IS GLORIOUS TO CONTEMPLATE, ISN'T IT?

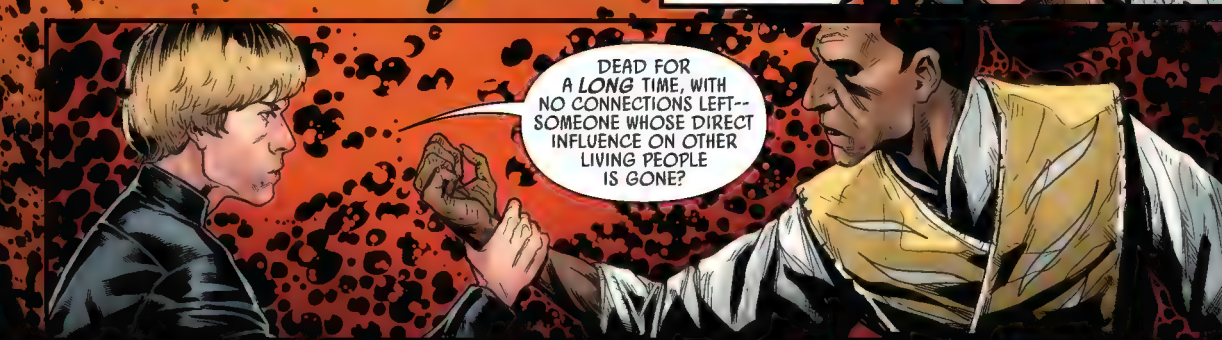


CAN ITS TARGET BE CHANGED?

IT CAN. BUT WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO?



WHAT IF ITS TARGET...IS SOMEONE WHO'S ALREADY DEAD?



DEAD FOR A LONG TIME, WITH NO CONNECTIONS LEFT-- SOMEONE WHOSE DIRECT INFLUENCE ON OTHER LIVING PEOPLE IS GONE?





MY, MY.  
AREN'T WE  
CLEVER.



SHOW ME.  
THE OLDEST BODY  
HERE.

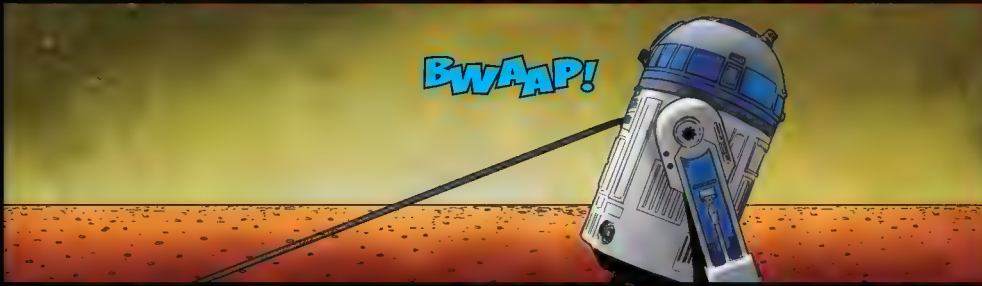
MAKE  
ME.

ZZZZZZ



SPZZAH









WE ARE  
NOT YOURS  
TO COMMAND,  
BOY!



HRRAAH!

REEL HIM  
IN, ARTOO!  
HURRY!



SKKKTCH

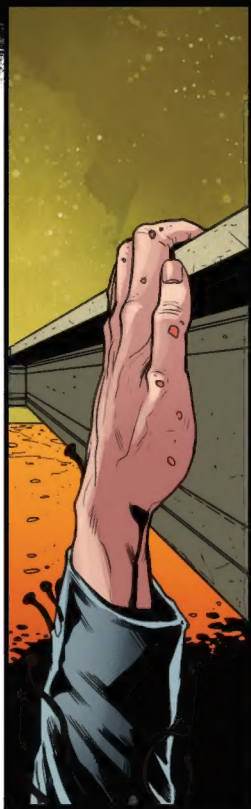
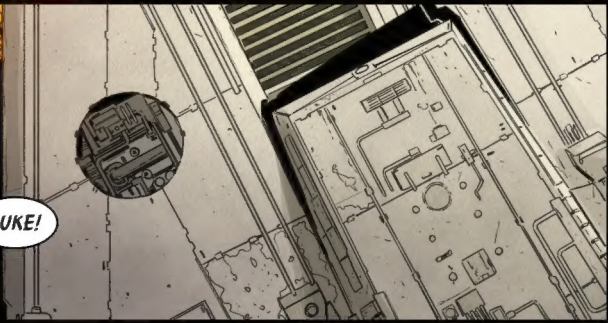
HRRGH!



VRRRR











SO? WHAT HAPPENED?

WELL, YOU KNOW THAT PALPATINE DIED ON THE SECOND DEATH STAR. SO YOU KNOW THE PROCESS WE ACTIVATED MUST HAVE STOPPED BEFORE IT REACHED HIM.

I GAVE THE GRIM ROSE A PIECE OF BONE FROM THAT ANCIENT SKELETON, WHICH CHANGED THE DEVICE'S TARGET.

AS SOON AS IT REALIZED THAT TARGET WAS ALREADY DEAD, IT DEACTIVATED.



RIGHT, OKAY... BUT... WHY DID YOU TELL ME THIS, MASTER?

IT DIDN'T GRAB YOU? I THOUGHT IT WAS A PRETTY GOOD STORY.

BUT FINE. IF YOU JUST WANT THE LESSON... THIS IS THE THING I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER.



DON'T BECOME EVIL TO DEFEAT EVIL.



WAS ANY OF THAT STORY TRUE? OR WAS IT, LIKE... A PARABLE?

OF COURSE IT WAS TRUE, BEN.



ALL OF IT.

End.



COMING IN OCTOBER...

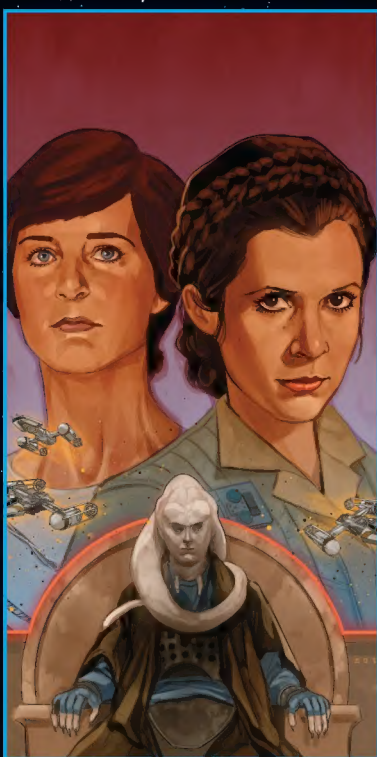
# STAR WARS

## THE BATTLE OF JAKKU

### INSURGENCY RISING



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